

"I DON'T
KNOW *WHAT* TO
MAKE OF IT."

IT'S... IT'S AS
LIKELY IT WAS A
FIGMENT OF MY MIND,
SOME *ELABORATE* DRUG-
INDUCED *FANTASY*, AS IT
WAS *REALITY*. RA'S AND
HIS *ALCHEMY*...

...I WAS
A *FOOL* FOR
BELIEVING HIM AT
ALL. FROM WHAT YOU
SAID, I NEARLY
DIED.

INDEED, SIR.

YOU'LL PARDON
ME FOR ASKING, BUT IS ITS
VERACITY RELEVANT?

WHAT?

IF IT WERE *REAL*,
RATHER THAN, SAY, AN
HALLUCINATION...

...DOES
IT *CHANGE*
ANYTHING?

OF *COURSE*
IT *DOES*.

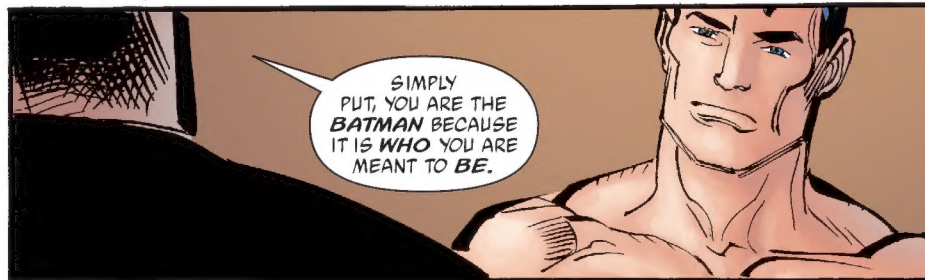
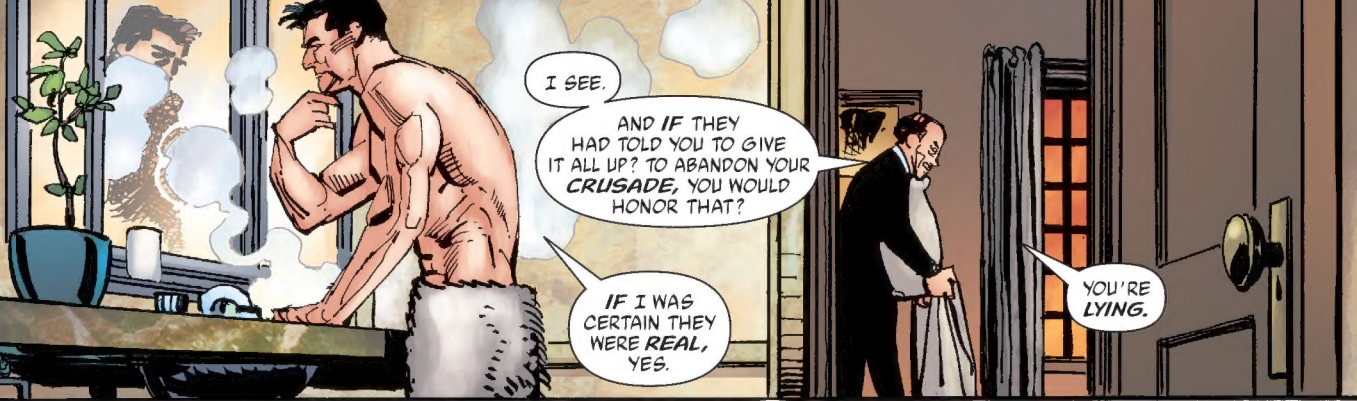
WHY?

I COULD
GIVE YOU
A *DOZEN*
ANSWERS.

ONE WILL
SUFFICE AT
THE START,
I THINK.

FINE.

WHAT
THEY WANT
MATTERS.



RAVENSBRUCK WOMEN'S
CONCENTRATION CAMP,
90 KM NORTH OF BERLIN,
APRIL 30, 1945.

⟨MOVE!
MOVE, GET INTO
LINE OR YOU'LL BE
LEFT BEHIND!⟩

⟨--SAID
TO LEAVE
IT! THEY'LL BE
HERE ANY
MOMENT!⟩

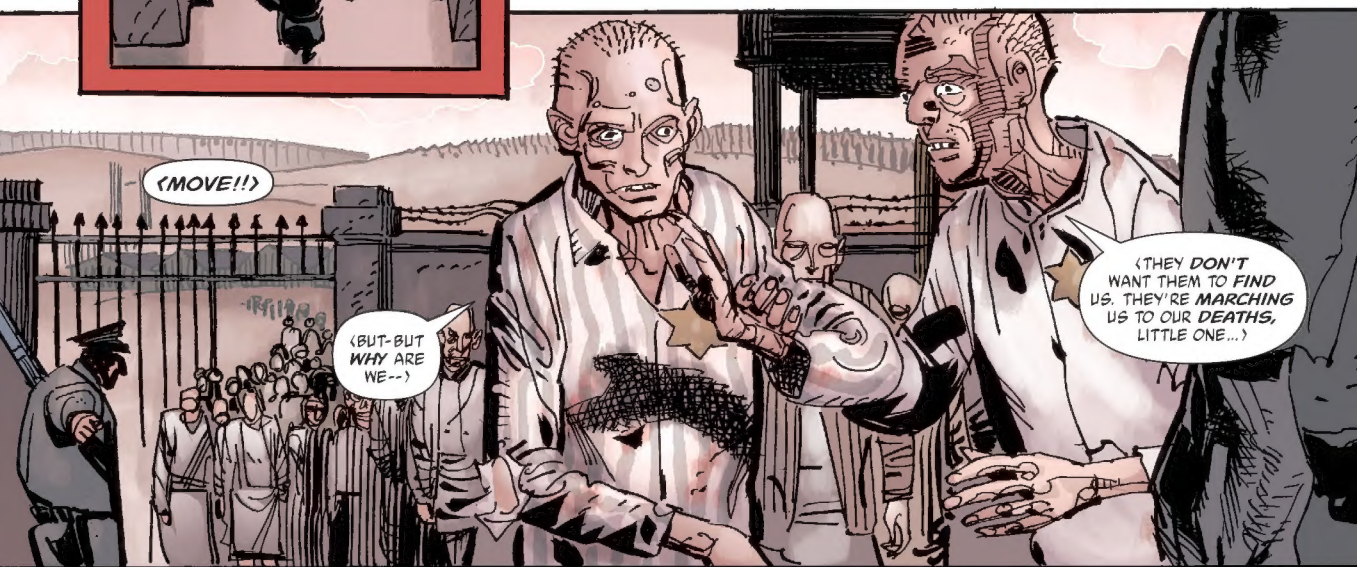
⟨WHAT WAS
THAT? SAY THAT
AGAIN AND YOU'LL
BE SHOT--⟩

⟨GET IN
LINE!!⟩

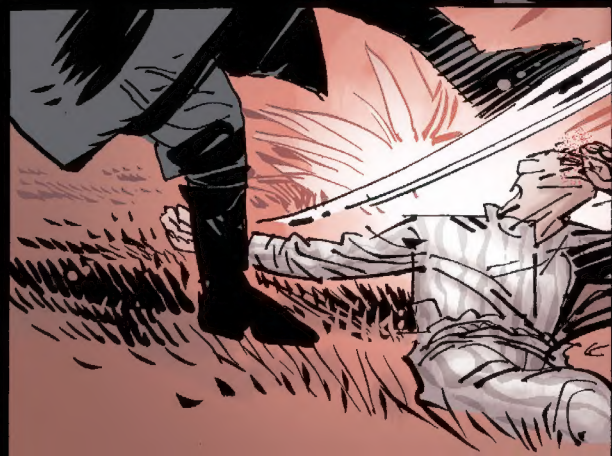
⟨THAT ONE,
THERE, LEAVE
HER BEHIND...⟩

⟨IDA...WHAT'S
HAPPENING?⟩

⟨SSH! THE
RUSSIANS ARE
COMING, NYSSA,
THEY SAY THEY'LL
BE HERE IN ONE
HOUR.⟩



⟨...THEY'LL
MARCH US UNTIL
WE'RE DEAD,
NOW...⟩







...HERE,
ARE YOU EVEN
LISTENING TO
ME, NYSSA?



NYSSA?

...YES, I'M...I'M
LISTENING.

YOU JUST
REMINDED ME OF
SOMEONE I KNEW,
THAT'S ALL.



YOU
LOOKED SO
FAR AWAY,
NYSSA.

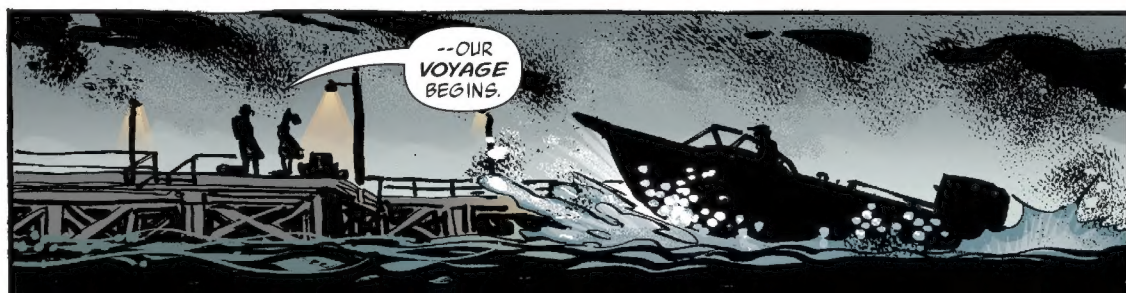
YES, BUT I
AM **BACK** NOW,
DON'T WORRY, LITTLE
SISTER. I'M TAKING
CARE OF **YOU**,
REMEMBER?



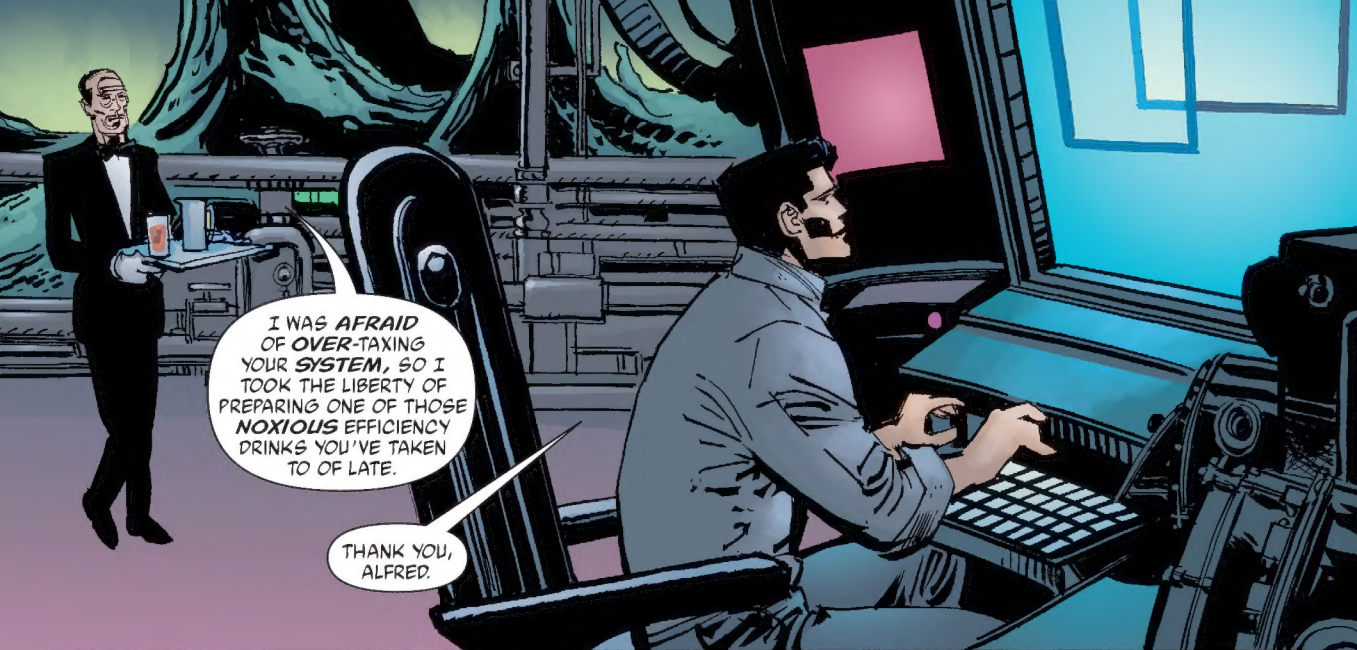
I KNOW.
YOU'RE **VERY** GOOD
TO ME--



HUSH,
ENOUGH
OF THAT.
LOOK--



--OUR
VOYAGE
BEGINS.



I WAS AFRAID OF OVER-TAXING YOUR **SYSTEM**, SO I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PREPARING ONE OF THOSE **NOXIOUS** EFFICIENCY DRINKS YOU'VE TAKEN TO OF LATE.

THANK YOU, ALFRED.

CAVE ACCESS

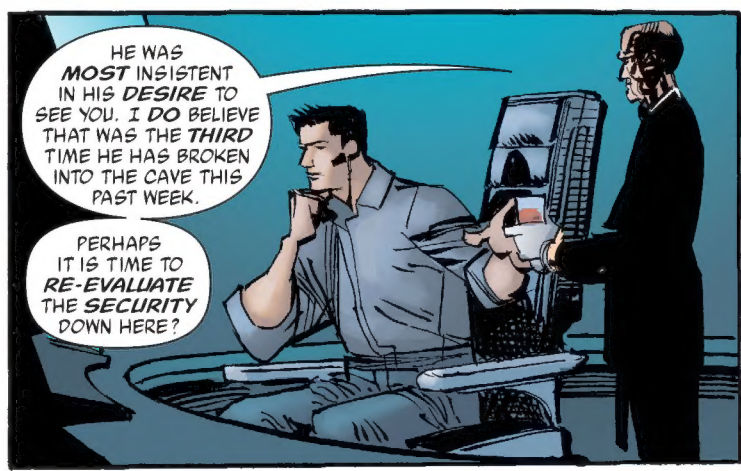
- AUTHORIZED:**
- 0055 Pennyworth, Alfred
 - 0018 Pennyworth, Alfred
 - 1756 Pennyworth, Alfred

UNAUTHORIZED:

- 1754 UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL(S)

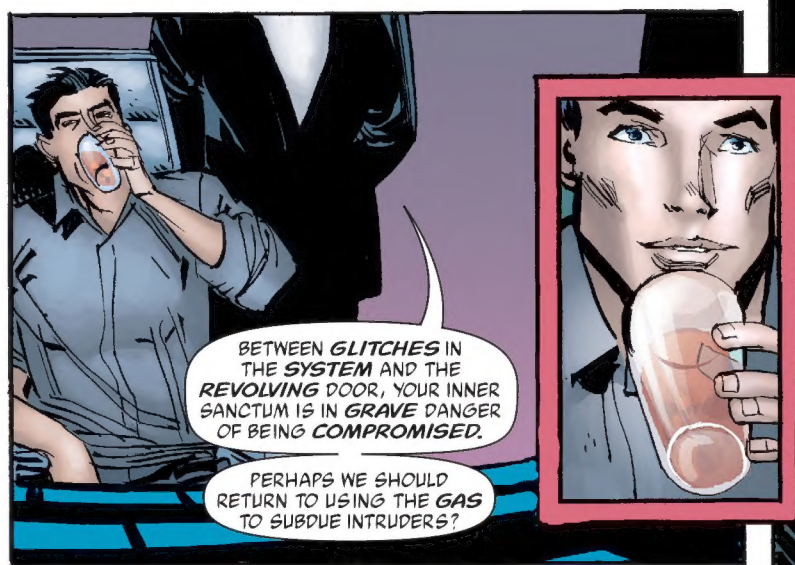
WHO WAS DOWN HERE?

IF YOU'RE REFERRING TO LAST **EVENING'S** BREACH, IT WAS PERPETRATED BY RA'S AL GHUL AND ONE OF HIS **THUGS**.



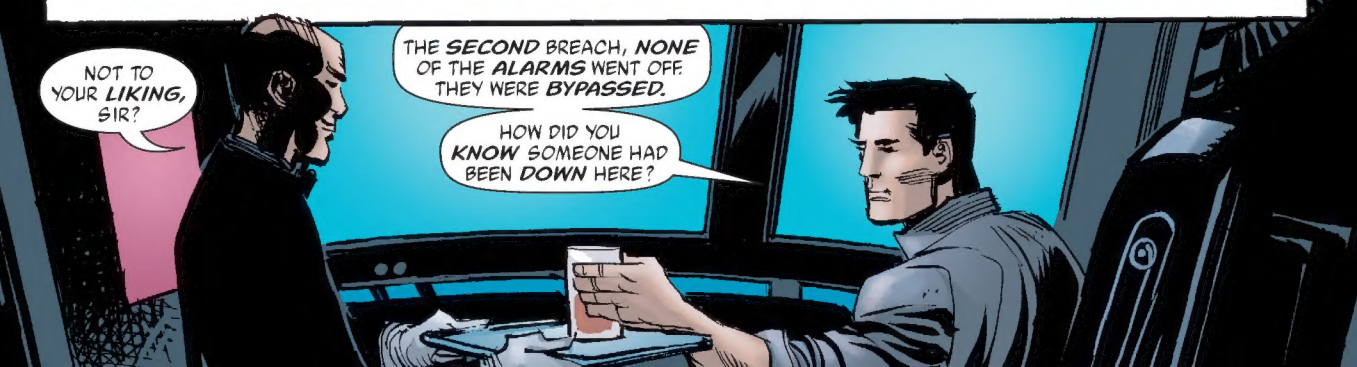
HE WAS **MOST** INSISTENT IN HIS **DESIRE** TO SEE YOU. I **DO** BELIEVE THAT WAS THE **THIRD** TIME HE HAS BROKEN INTO THE CAVE THIS PAST WEEK.

PERHAPS IT IS TIME TO **RE-EVALUATE** THE **SECURITY** DOWN HERE?



BETWEEN **GLITCHES** IN THE **SYSTEM** AND THE **REVOLVING** DOOR, YOUR INNER SANCTUM IS IN **GRAVE** DANGER OF BEING **COMPROMISED**.

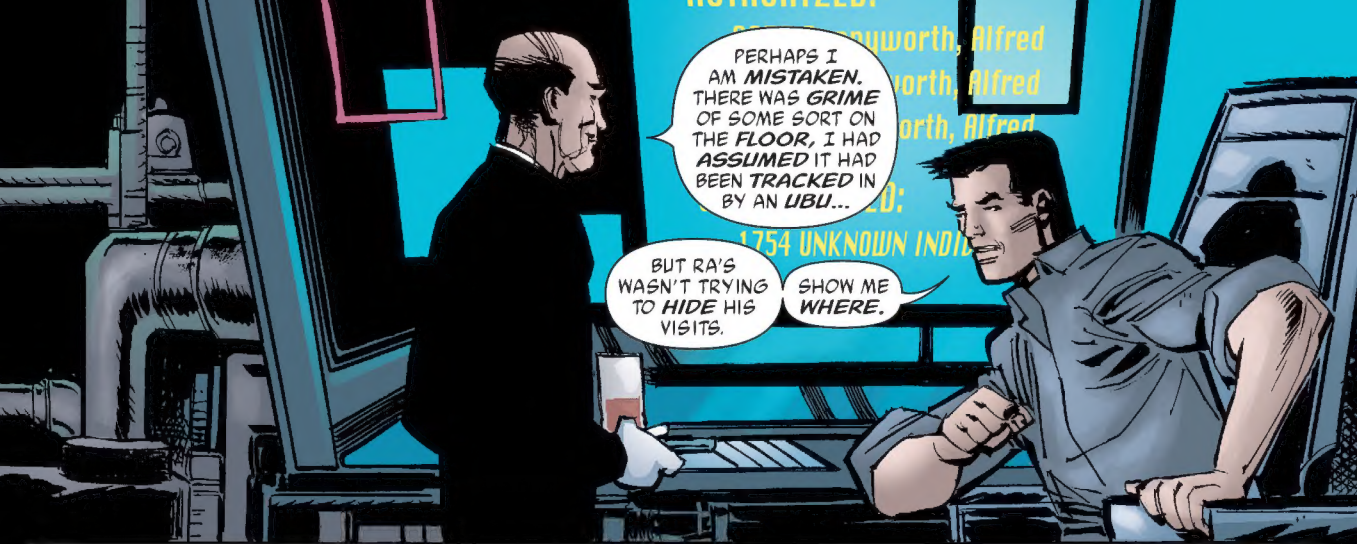
PERHAPS WE SHOULD RETURN TO USING THE **GAS** TO SUBDUDE INTRUDERS?



NOT TO YOUR **LIKING**, SIR?

THE **SECOND** BREACH, **NONE** OF THE **ALARMS** WENT OFF. THEY WERE **BYPASSED**.

HOW DID YOU **KNOW** SOMEONE HAD BEEN **DOWN** HERE?



PERHAPS I AM **MISTAKEN**. THERE WAS **GRIME** OF SOME SORT ON THE **FLOOR**, I HAD **ASSUMED** IT HAD BEEN **TRACKED** IN BY AN **UBU**...

BUT RA'S WASN'T TRYING TO **HIDE** HIS VISITS.

SHOW ME **WHERE**.



I **WAS** PLANNING ON **CLEANING** LATER, BUT YOUR... **CONDITION** KEPT ME FROM MORE **MUNDANE** DUTIES.

JUST AS **WELL**.

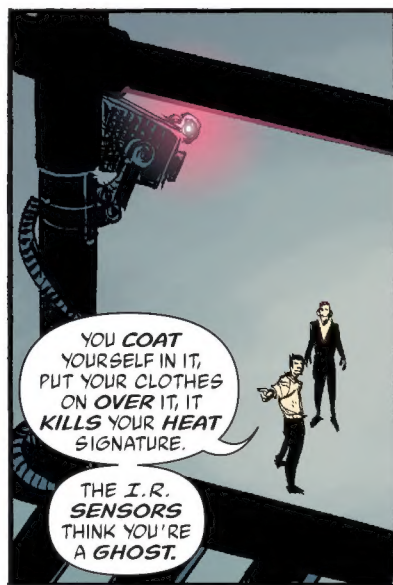


THIS **ISN'T** DIRT.



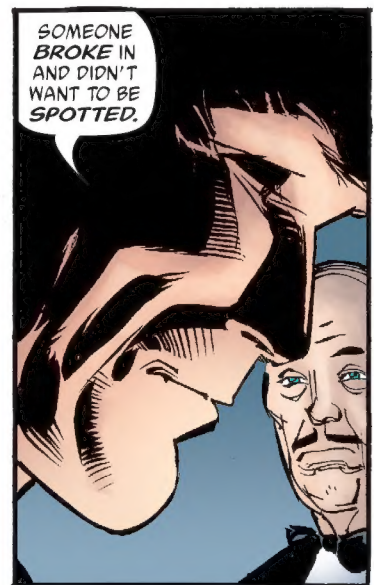
IT'S A **LATEX** COMPOUND, PROBABLY APPLIED IN **LIQUID** FORM.

I'M NOT CERTAIN I FOLLOW.

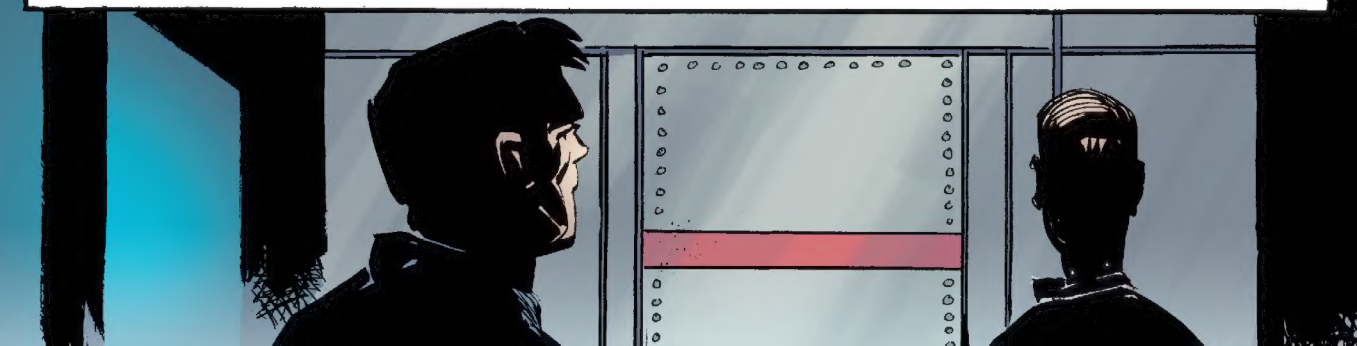


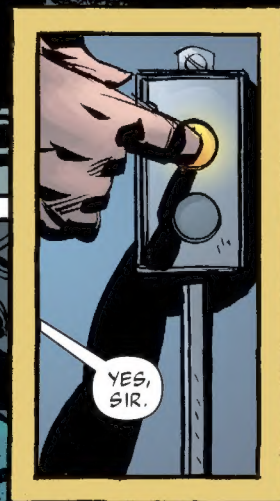
YOU **COAT** YOURSELF IN IT, PUT YOUR CLOTHES ON **OVER** IT, IT **KILLS** YOUR **HEAT** SIGNATURE.

THE **I.R.** SENSORS THINK YOU'RE A **GHOST**.



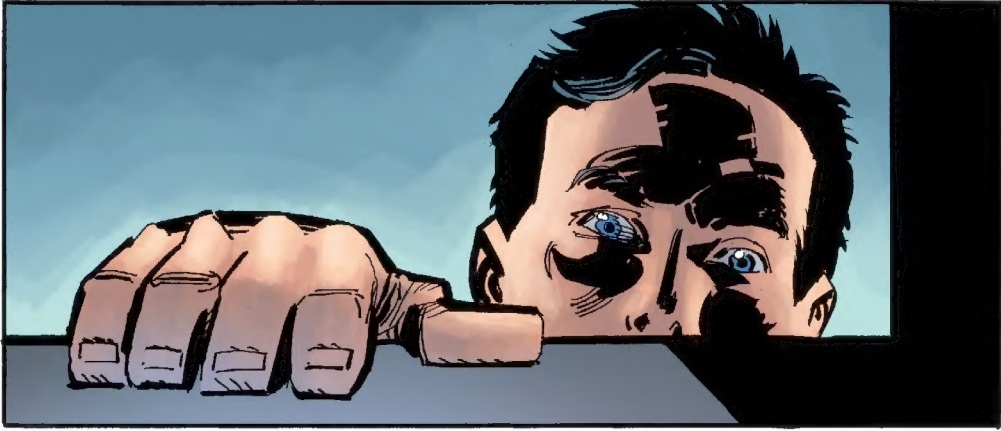
SOMEONE **BROKE** IN AND DIDN'T WANT TO BE **SPOTTED**.

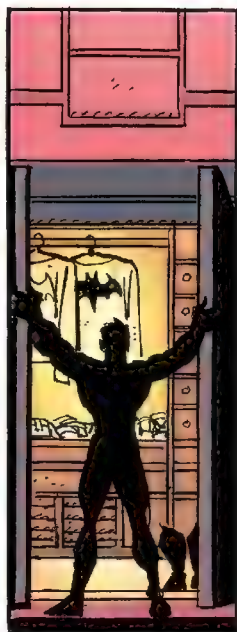
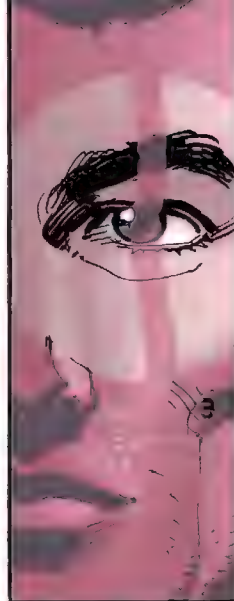
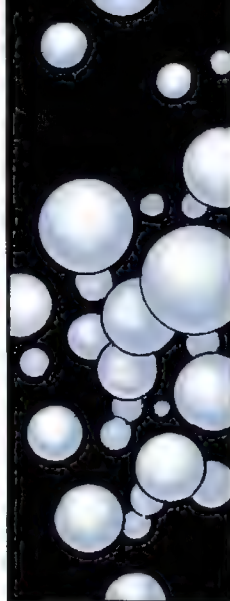


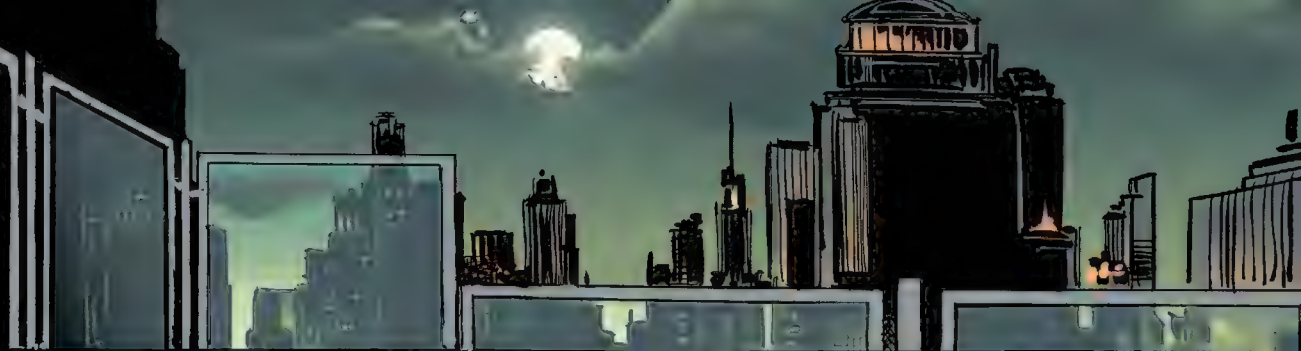


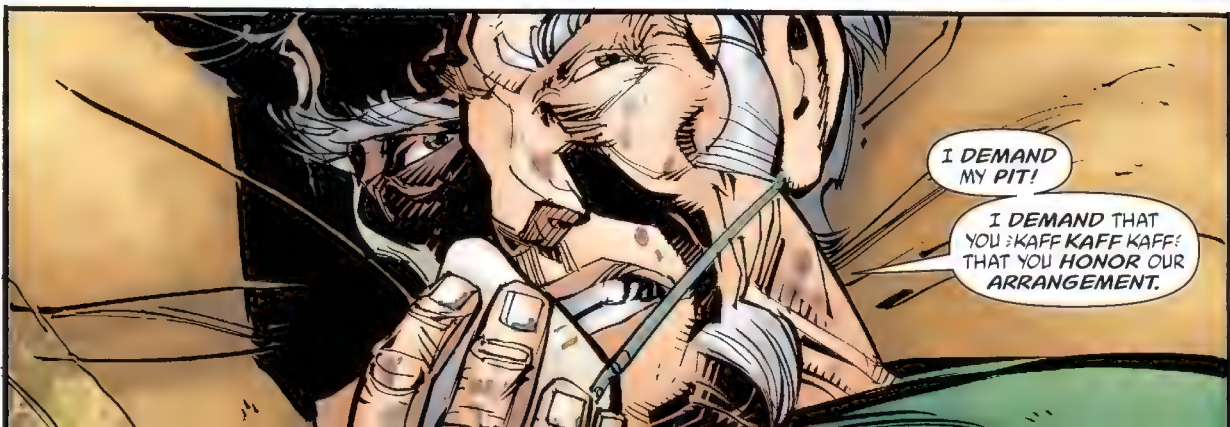
SHUUNK



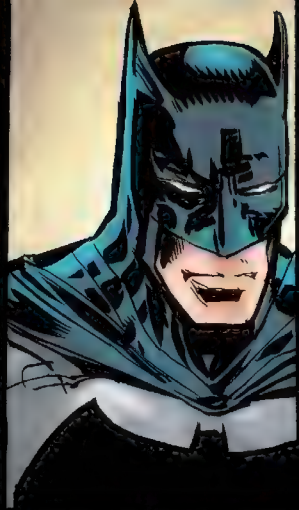












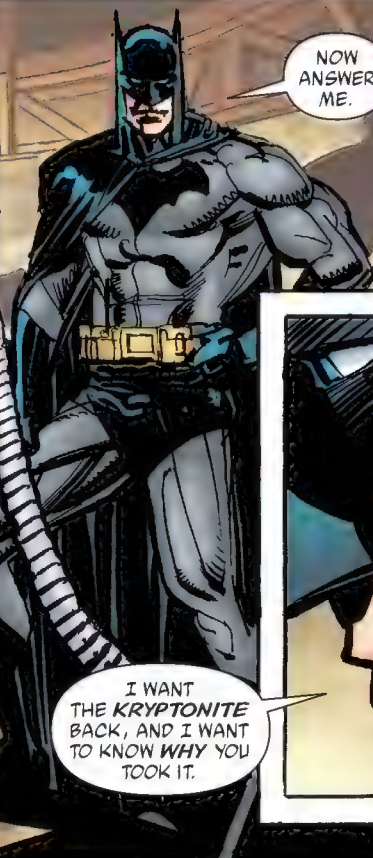
NEAR
AL-HIBAK,
IN SAUDI
ARABIA.

IT'S
YOURS.



I TAKE
YOU AT YOUR
WORD.

(UBU, MAKE
PREPARATIONS.
WE MUST LEAVE
AS SOON AS
WE CAN.)



NOW
ANSWER
ME.

YOU
HAD ONE
OF YOUR UBU'S
BREAK INTO
THE CAVE,
RA'S.



I WANT
THE KRYPTONITE
BACK, AND I WANT
TO KNOW WHY YOU
TOOK IT.



I HAVE
NO IDEA WHAT
YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT.

RA'S--

I DO NOT LIE,
DETECTIVE. WHY
WOULD I?

I HAVE TAKEN
NOTHING FROM
YOUR HOME. YOU
MISTAKE ME FOR
ANOTHER.

A MUTUAL
ACQUAINTANCE
WHO SPOKE
TO YOU OF MY
VILLAINY,
PERHAPS?





NYSSA.



WHO IS SHE?

HAVE YOU NOT REALIZED? MY DAUGHTER, DETECTIVE. OR, I SHOULD SAY, MY :KAFF: OTHER DAUGHTER...

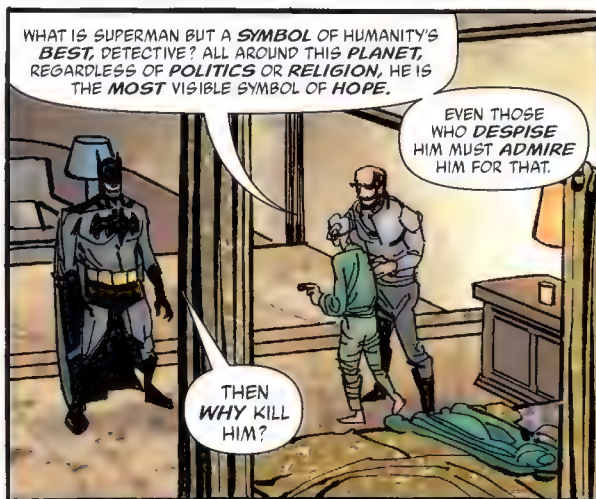
...WOULD YOU BELIEVE I CAN BARELY RECALL WHAT HER MOTHER LOOKED LIKE, LET ALONE THE PEASANT GIRL'S NAME...



THERE'S ONLY ONE USE FOR THAT KRYPTONITE.

INDEED, NYSSA MEANS TO KILL HIM. AS TO WHY, I CAN ONLY :KAFF: SPECULATE. HER GOALS AND MY OWN DIVERGED CENTURIES AGO.

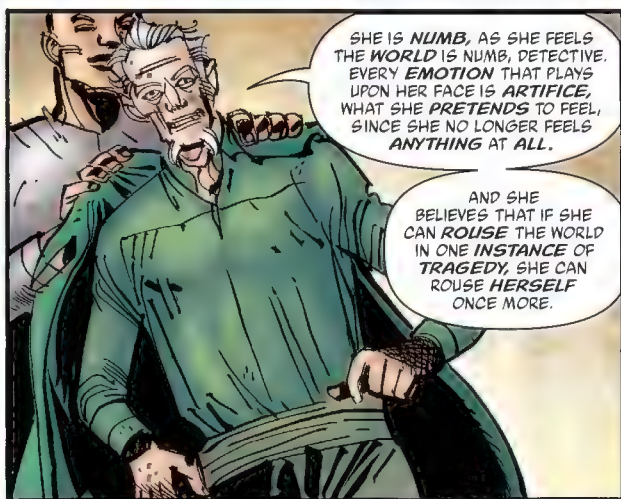
I SUSPECT SHE WISHES TO CRAFT A UNIFYING MOMENT. TO SHATTER, HOWEVER BRIEFLY, HUMANITY'S APATHY AND SELFISHNESS.



WHAT IS SUPERMAN BUT A **SYMBOL** OF HUMANITY'S BEST, DETECTIVE? ALL AROUND THIS PLANET, REGARDLESS OF POLITICS OR RELIGION, HE IS THE MOST VISIBLE SYMBOL OF HOPE.

EVEN THOSE WHO DESPISE HIM MUST ADMIRE HIM FOR THAT.

THEN WHY KILL HIM?



SHE IS NUMB, AS SHE FEELS THE WORLD IS NUMB, DETECTIVE. EVERY EMOTION THAT PLAYS UPON HER FACE IS ARTIFICE, WHAT SHE PRETENDS TO FEEL, SINCE SHE NO LONGER FEELS ANYTHING AT ALL.

AND SHE BELIEVES THAT IF SHE CAN ROUSE THE WORLD IN ONE INSTANCE OF TRAGEDY, SHE CAN ROUSE HERSELF ONCE MORE.



KILL SUPERMAN AND THE WORLD WEEPS.

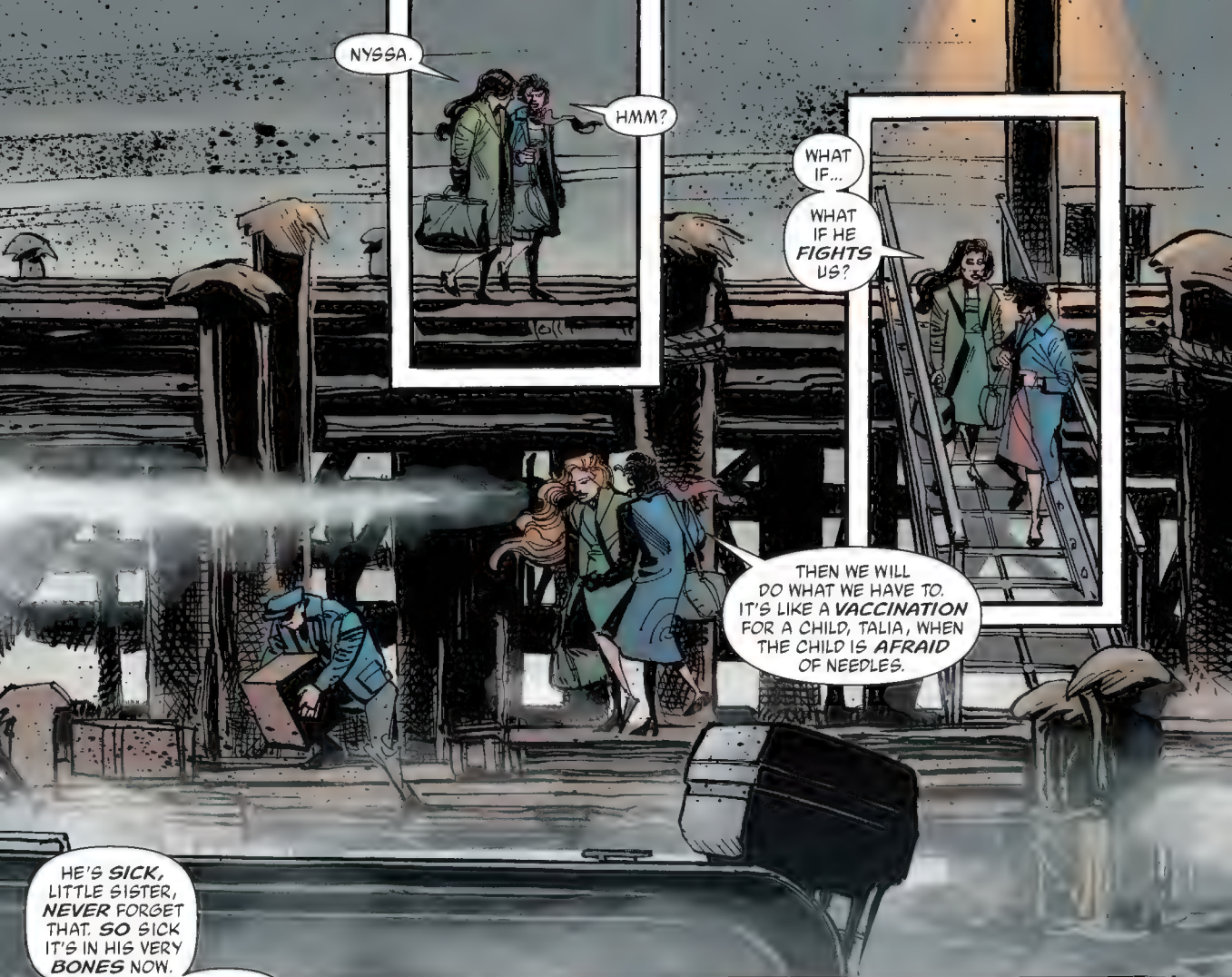


AND IN THE WORLD'S TEARS, DETECTIVE, SHE HOPES TO FIND HER OWN ONCE MORE.

NEVER REALIZING THE ONE THING THAT COULD TRULY BRING THAT HOPE TO LIFE.



FAREWELL.



NYSSA.

HMM?

WHAT
IF...

WHAT
IF HE
FIGHTS
US?

THEN WE WILL
DO WHAT WE HAVE TO.
IT'S LIKE A **VACCINATION**
FOR A CHILD, TALIA, WHEN
THE CHILD IS **AFRAID**
OF NEEDLES.

HE'S **SICK**,
LITTLE SISTER,
NEVER FORGET
THAT. **SO SICK**
IT'S IN HIS VERY
BONES NOW.

AS THE
ONES WHO
LOVE HIM, WE
HAVE TO
HELP HIM.

YOU'RE
RIGHT, I
KNOW YOU'RE
RIGHT.

WHAT
WE DO,
WE DO FOR
HIS OWN
GOOD.





IS RA'S TO
BE TRUSTED?

NOT IN
A MILLION YEARS,
ALFRED.

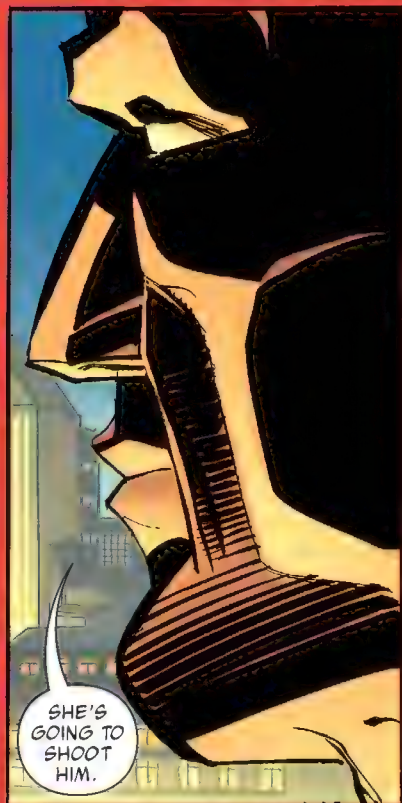
BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN HE
WASN'T TELLING
THE TRUTH.

AND NO IDEA
WHEN AND HOW NYSSA
WILL STRIKE?

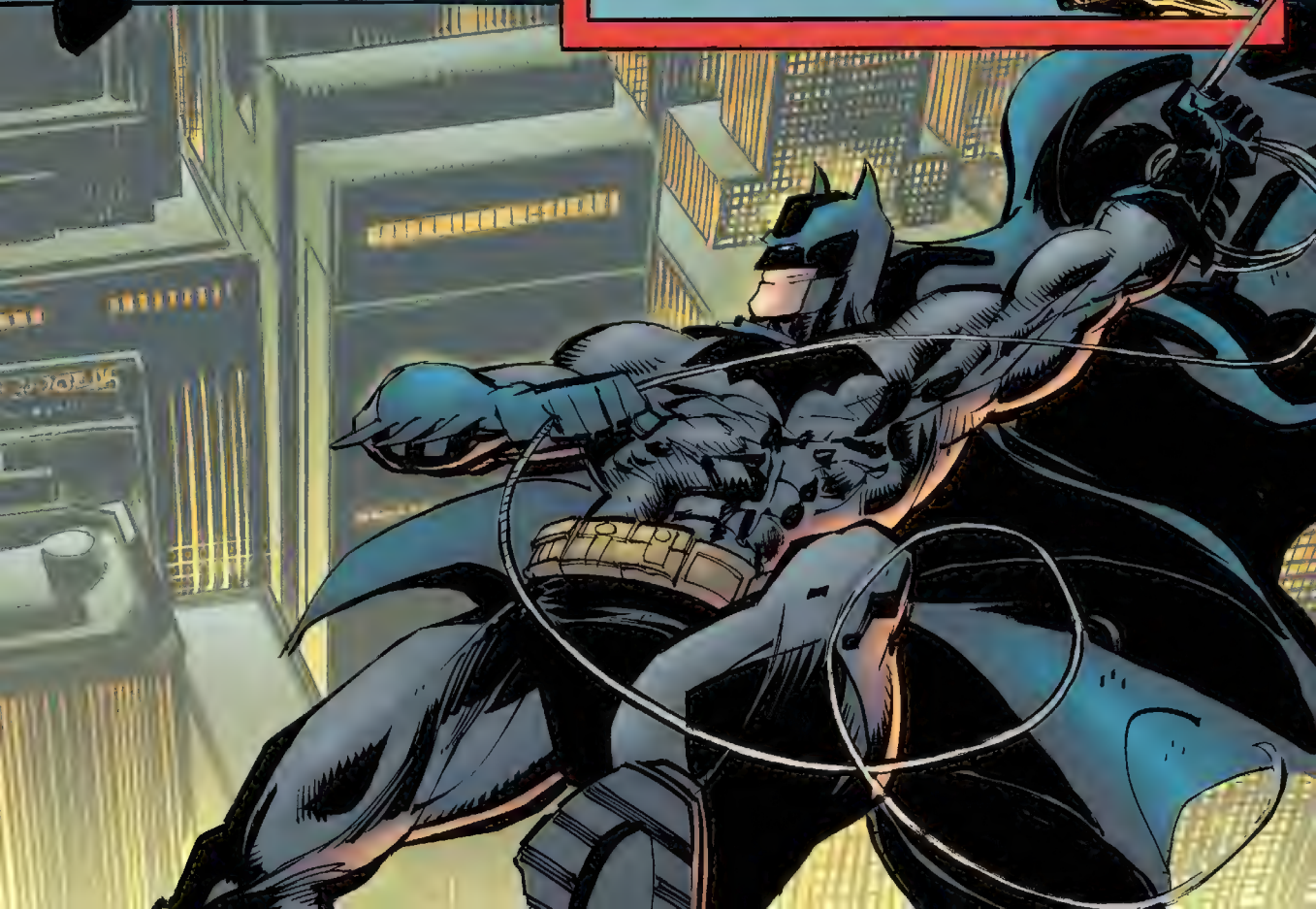


NYSSA'S AN
ARCHITECT. SHE'LL
BE AS PRECISE IN
THIS AS IN EVERY-
THING ELSE.

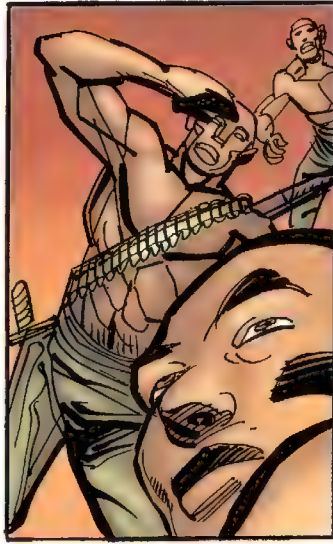
SHE WON'T
LET HIM GET CLOSE.
SHE'LL DO IT AT RANGE,
TRY TO TAKE HIM
UNAWARE.

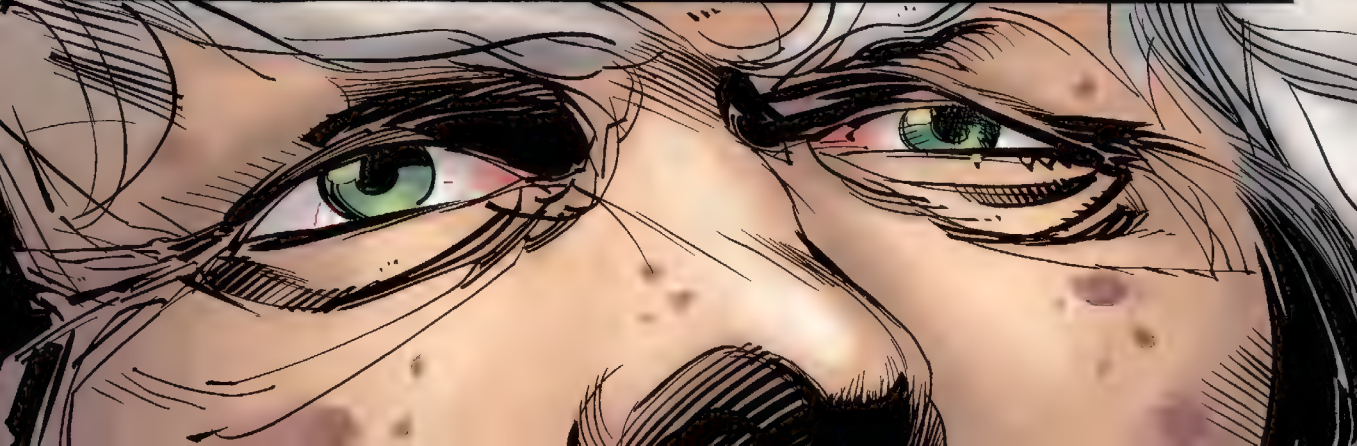
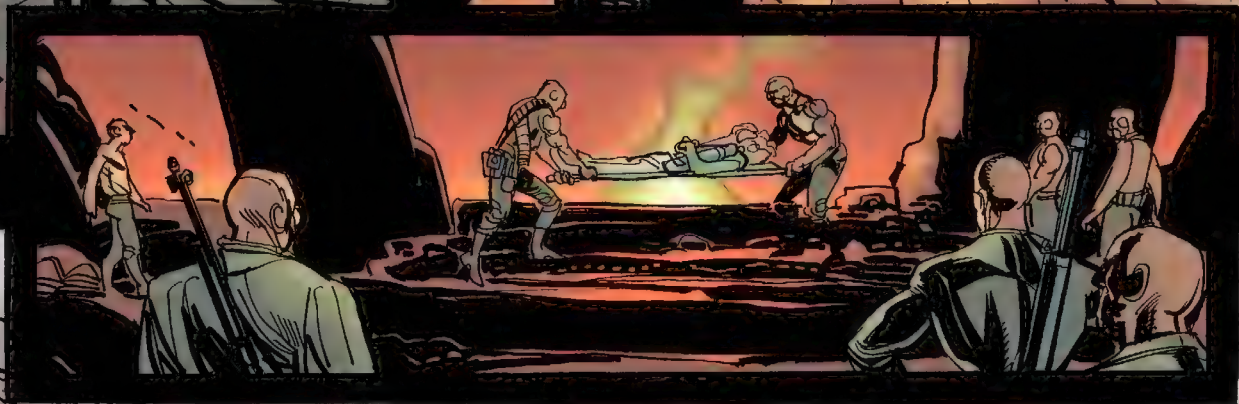


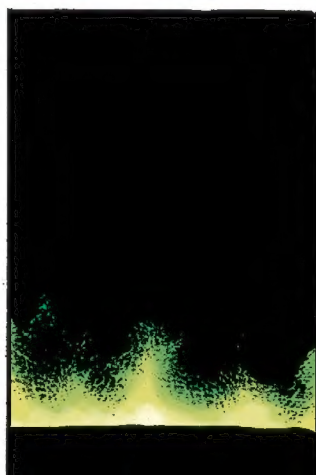
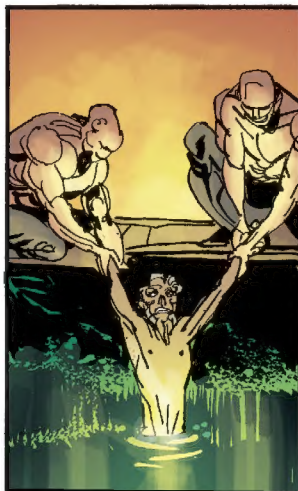
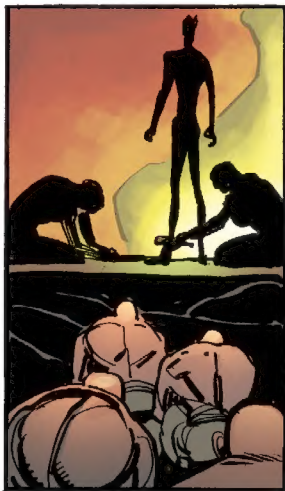
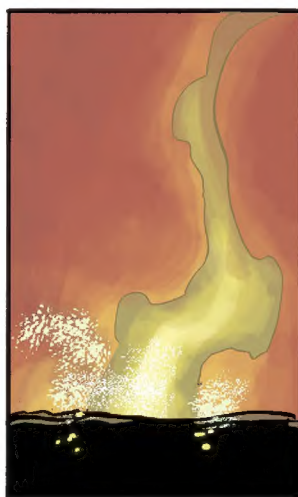
SHE'S
GOING TO
SHOOT
HIM.



SAUDI ARABIA, EASTERN
PROVINCE, 67 MILES
NNW OF OMAN









From Baaldur, with love...

GLORITH





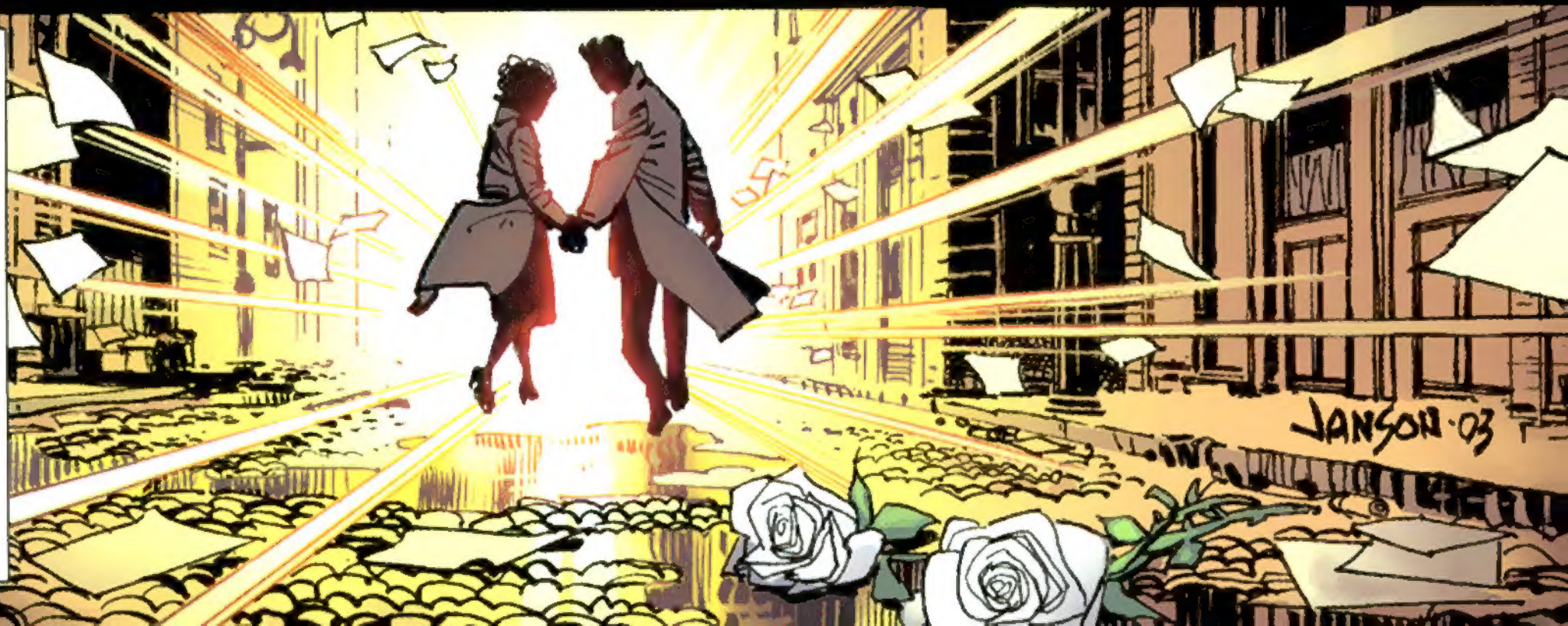
B A T M A N

no. **SEVEN** of nine

April 2004 \$2.95 us \$4.50 can

Rucka & Janson

DEATH AND THE MAIDENS



JANSON '03